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**20  
NOV**

DIGITAL  
EDITION

# SPAWN





**image** COMICS PRESENTS:

# "SHOWTIME"

PART 2



story

**TOM ORZECOWSKI**  
**ANDREW GROSSBERG**

pencils

**GREG CAPULLO**

inks

**TODD McFARLANE**  
**MARK PENNINGTON**

copy editor & letters

**TOM ORZECOWSKI**

color

**STEVE OLIFF**  
and **OLYOPTICS**

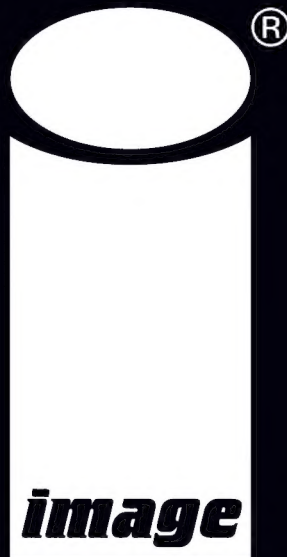
Dedicated to:  
**ROY THOMAS**

FOR IMAGE COMICS

LARRY MARDER - exec. director    TONY LOBITO - publisher

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Director Of Creative Development: **TERRY FITZGERALD.**  
Graphics Coordinator: **JULIA SIMMONS.**



**image**



Ah, MY DEMONIC FRIEND, THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO TEACH YOU ABOUT MAGIC.

LIKE HOW THE HECK YOU'RE MAKING THIS CAR DEFY GRAVITY?

DEFY GRAVITY? NONSENSE! I'VE SIMPLY CONVINCED GRAVITY THAT THE CAR IS LIGHTER THAN AIR. WE'VE BECOME LIKE A DIRIGIBLE, PROPELLED BY OUR OWN EXHAUST.

YOU CAN'T DEFY A LAW OF PHYSICS. MAGIC WORKS WITH THE NATURAL WORLD, NOT AGAINST IT.

IT DOESN'T SOUND SO NATURAL TO ME.

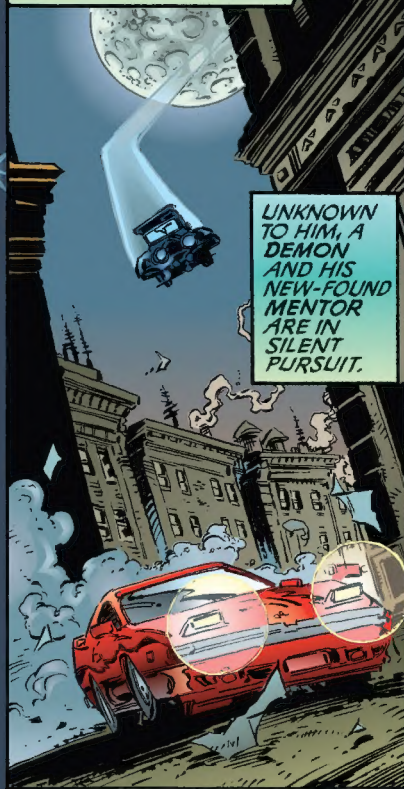
THAT'S WHY I AM TEACHING YOU.

WAIT! I SEE THE PUNK DOWN THERE!

FOLLOWING HIS MURDER, AL SIMMONS WAS REBORN AS THE DEMONIC SPAWN. HE NOW FACES A WORLD THAT'S CHANGED IN UNEXPECTED WAYS... AND HIS OWN NEW ABILITIES, JUST AS UNEXPECTED AND MYSTERIOUS.



THE LATE NIGHT SILENCE OF MANHATTAN'S LITTLE UKRAINE IS CUT BY THE ROAR OF THE BOMBER'S SPEEDING CAR.



UNKNOWN TO HIM, A DEMON AND HIS NEW-FOUND MENTOR ARE IN SILENT PURSUIT.



I WONDER WHO HE'S MEETING HERE.

MAN, THAT WAS THE BEST ONE YET!

GOTTA CATCH THE NEWS-- SEE IF I MADE IT THIS TIME!



HE'S GOTTA BE WORKING FOR THE MOB OR SOMEONE.

WHO CARES? WE CAN GET HIM LATER.

I'VE GOT TWO INVITES TO THE MAGICIANS' CLUB FOR SOME AFTER-HOURS FUN. ONE OF THEIR BOYS HAS A TRUNK OF MINE I'D LIKE TO LOOK IN ON. COMING?



THE HECK WITH THAT! I'M STICKING TO THIS KID LIKE GLUE!

SOMETHING'LL TURN UP.

SUIT YOURSELF. I'LL SEE YOU IN A FEW HOURS.

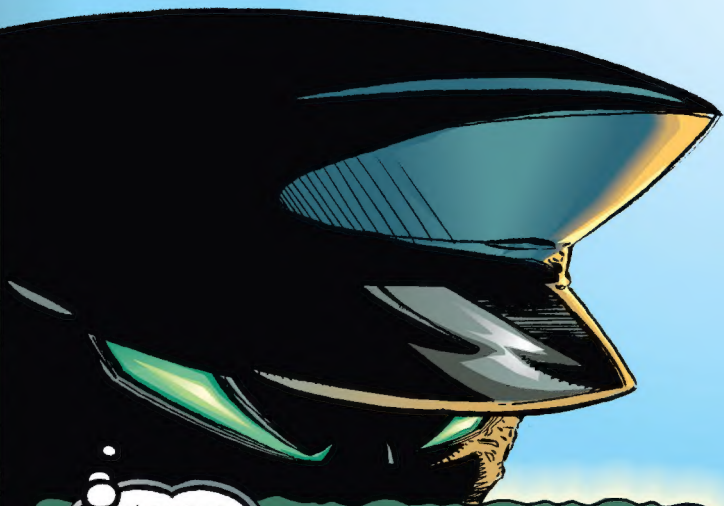


TIME PASSES SLOWLY... BUT WHEN HE WAS ALIVE AND A SOLDIER, AL SIMMONS WAS USED TO WAITING.





CYRILLIC  
WRITING ON  
THESE SIGNS...  
TAKES ME  
BACK.



MONTEREY,  
CALIFORNIA...  
LANGUAGE  
IMMERSION SCHOOL.  
QUITE A FEW YEARS  
AGO. I DON'T  
KNOW HOW I GOT  
THROUGH IT.

GOOD  
THING I HAD  
A BUDDY'S  
PAPERS TO READ.  
THAT'S WHEN  
I MET--

--TERRY!  
THAT'S HIS  
VOICE DOWN  
THERE!



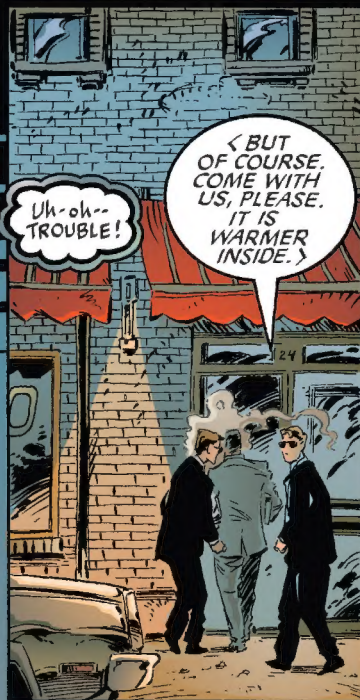
<EXCUSE ME PLEASE,  
GENTLEMEN. I AM  
SPECIAL AGENT  
FITZGERALD, WITH  
THE U.S. GOVERN-  
MENT. MAY I  
ASK YOU SOME  
QUESTIONS?> \*

WHAT'S  
HE  
DOING  
HERE?

Uh-oh--  
TROUBLE!

<BUT  
OF COURSE.  
COME WITH  
US, PLEASE.  
IT IS  
WARMER  
INSIDE.>

\*TRANSLATED  
FROM RUSSIAN.



<YOUR  
ACCENT NEEDS  
PRACTICE,  
LITTLE SPY.  
LET US TEACH  
YOU.>

HURGH!







LEAVE  
HIM  
ALONE!

KLOK!

THAT'S MY  
FRIEND!

SPT  
SPT  
SPT  
SPT  
SPT

ULP!

KLNK  
NK  
NK





C'MON, TERRY, LET'S GO.

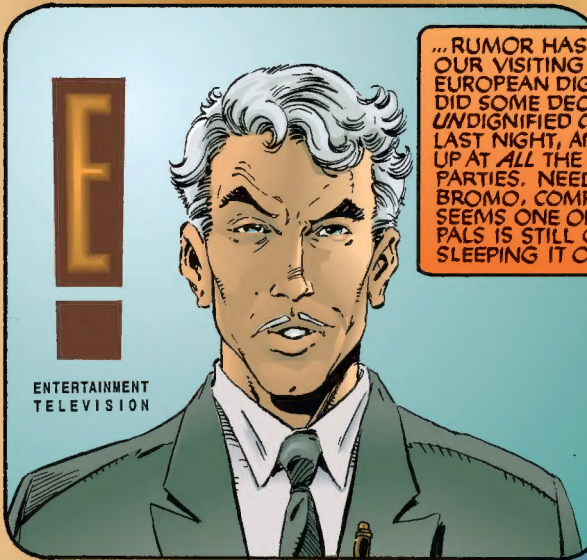
WHAT'S THIS SAY... YOUSEF VOLOKHOV... JEEZ! I ALMOST BAGGED HIM YEARS AGO!



SAYS HE'S HERE FOR SOME WEAPONS CONFERENCE AND WENT AWOL. BUT WHERE--

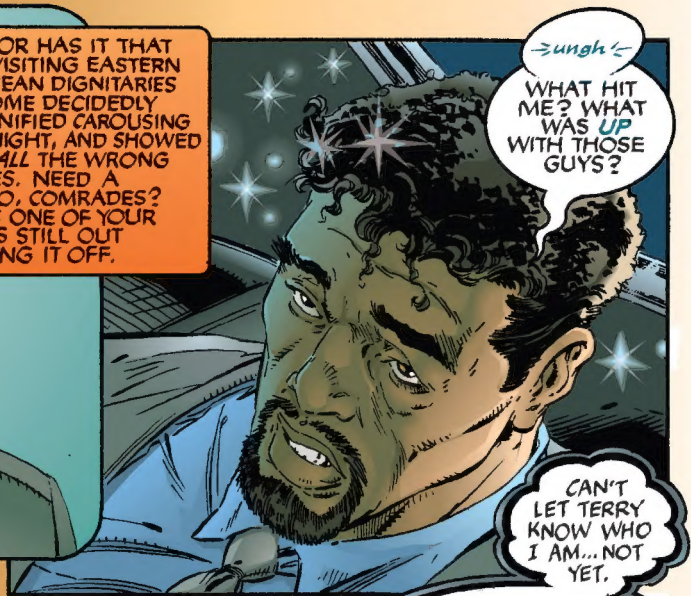






ENTERTAINMENT  
TELEVISION

...RUMOR HAS IT THAT OUR VISITING EASTERN EUROPEAN DIGNITARIES DID SOME DECIDEDLY UN/DIGNIFIED CAROUSING LAST NIGHT, AND SHOWED UP AT *ALL* THE WRONG PARTIES. NEED A BROMO, COMRADES? SEEMS ONE OF YOUR PALS IS STILL OUT SLEEPING IT OFF.



UGH!  
WHAT HIT ME? WHAT WAS *UP* WITH THOSE GUYS?

CAN'T LET TERRY KNOW WHO I AM... NOT YET.

...YUSEF VOLOKHOV, A VISITING SCIENTIST FROM THE EAST-WEST ATOMIC WARFARE, SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS CONFERENCE, IS STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR. SOURCES CLOSE TO THE NYPD HAVE INFORMED US OF A MAJOR SEARCH FOR THE MISSING TECHNICIAN. FOUL PLAY HAS NOT BEEN RULED OUT.



CNN

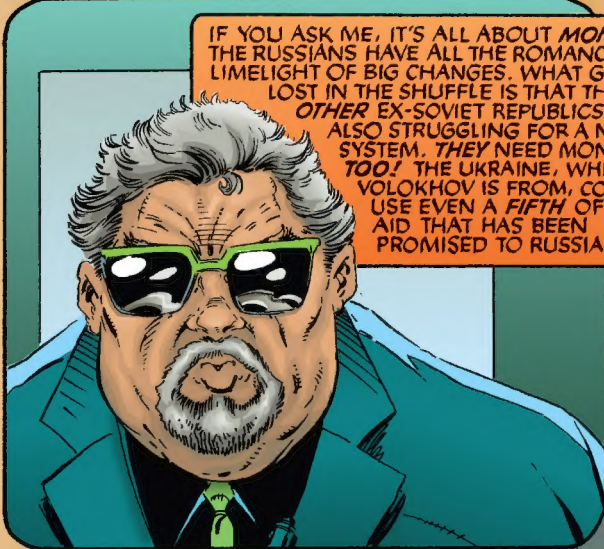
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. THANKS, MISTER, FOR PULLIN' MY SKILLET OUT OF THE FIRE.

Y'KNOW, BROTHER, YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE MORE CAREFUL WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND HERE.

I'LL NEVER LET WANDA BECOME A WIDOW AGAIN.



IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S ALL ABOUT *MONEY*. THE RUSSIANS HAVE ALL THE ROMANCE AND LIMELIGHT OF BIG CHANGES. WHAT GETS LOST IN THE SHUFFLE IS THAT THE *OTHER* EX-SOVIET REPUBLICS ARE ALSO STRUGGLING FOR A NEW SYSTEM. *THEY* NEED MONEY, *TOO!* THE UKRAINE, WHERE VOLOKHOV IS FROM, COULD USE EVEN A *FIFTH* OF THE AID THAT HAS BEEN PROMISED TO RUSSIA.

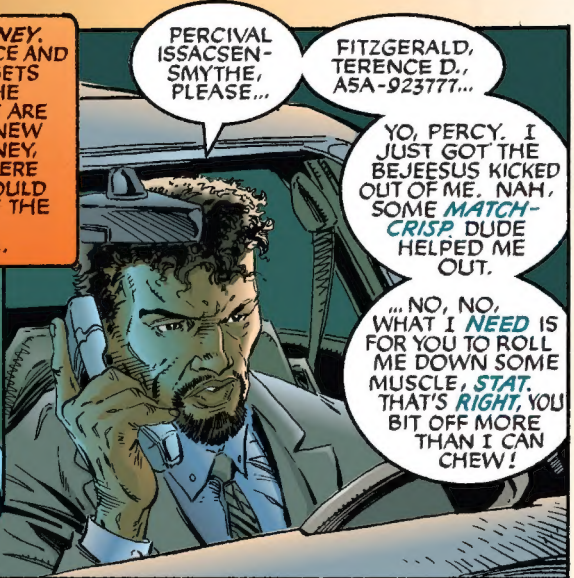


PERCIVAL ISSACSEN-SMYTHE, PLEASE...

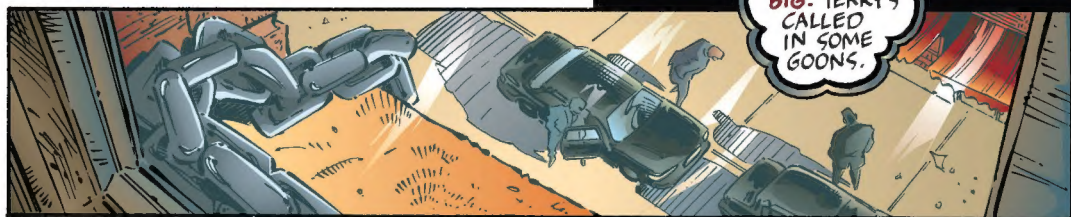
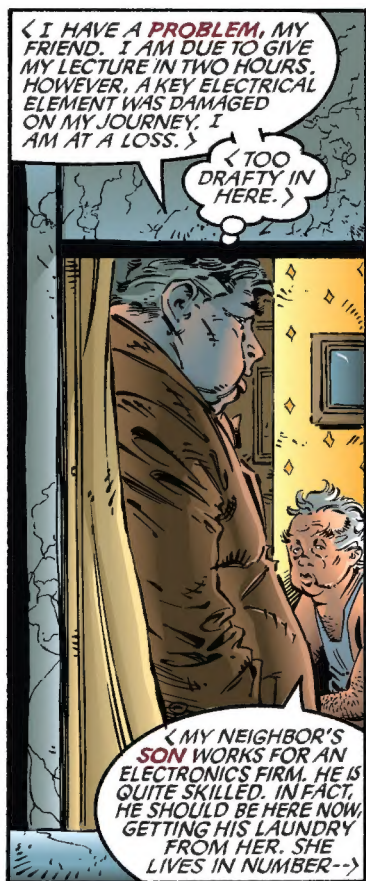
FITZGERALD, TERENCE D., A5A-923777...

YO, PERCY. I JUST GOT THE BEJEESUS KICKED OUT OF ME. NAH, SOME *MATCH-CRISP* DUDE HELPED ME OUT.

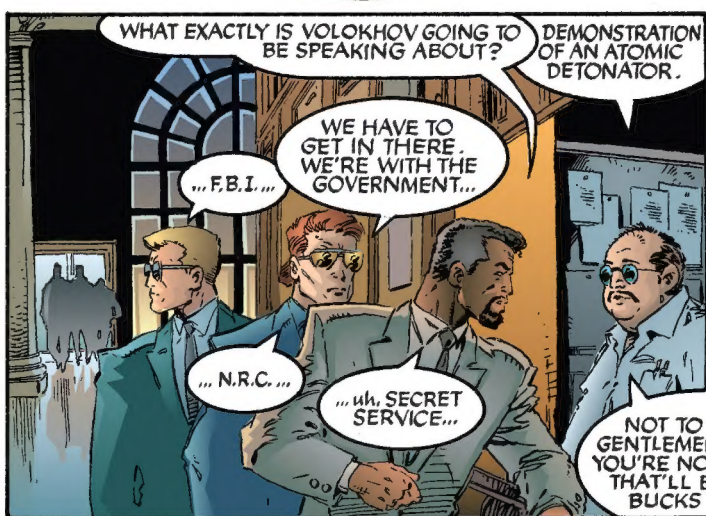
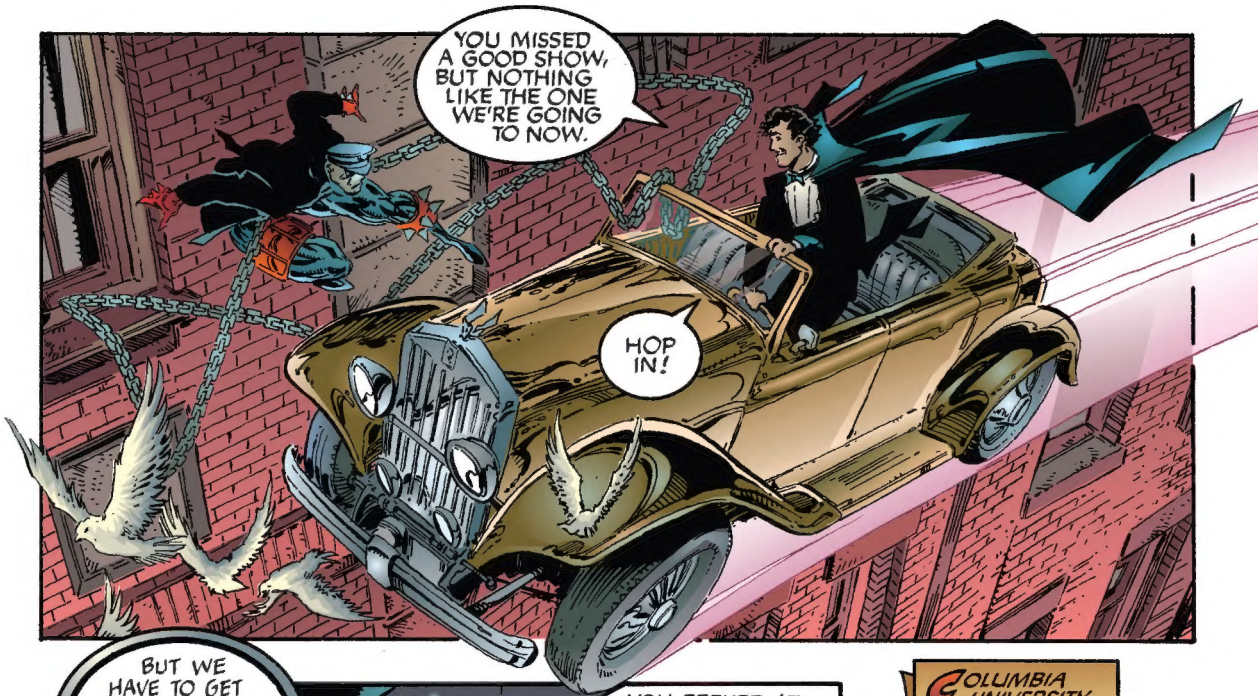
...NO, NO, WHAT I *NEED* IS FOR YOU TO ROLL ME DOWN SOME MUSCLE, *STAT*. THAT'S *RIGHT*, YOU BIT OFF MORE THAN I CAN CHEW!



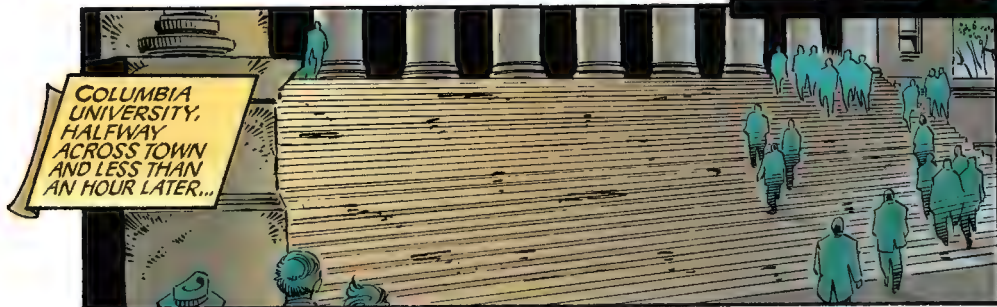














IT IS A SURPRISINGLY LARGE TURN-OUT FOR THE DRY TOPIC AT HAND. ONLY THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS OR DEVOUT WEAPONRY WORKS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN FINELY ENGINEERED ATOMIC DETONATORS.

THEY WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.

THE AUDIENCE GROWS QUIET AS YOUSEF VOLOKHOV, A PIONEER OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION'S ATOMIC PROGRAM, WALKS TO THE PODIUM.

THIS IS HIS PROUDEST MOMENT. HE HAS SPENT OVER FORTY YEARS IN TOP-SECRET RESEARCH. NOW, AT LAST, HE CAN GAIN THE EYES AND EARS OF THE WORLD.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER REASON FOR YOUSEF TO BE HERE. HIS OBJECTIVE IS NOT RECOGNITION. THE WELL-BEING OF HIS COUNTRY, THE UKRAINE, IS HIS SOLE CONCERN.

THE MOMENT IS AT HAND. MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE SMILE IN RECOGNITION. THERE'S NO MISTAKING THE CHROMIUM STEEL OBJECT FOR ANYTHING BUT WHAT IT IS:

... AN ATOMIC BOMB.

THE BRIEFCASE IS HANDED GINGERLY TO YOUSEF.

KLIK

HE WITH-DRAWS A SHIELDED CONTAINER.

IN IT IS ENOUGH PLUTONIUM FOR A BOMB WHICH COULD LEVEL A GOOD-SIZED SECTION OF A CITY...

...THIS CITY.



THE AUDIENCE REACTS, EITHER IN TERROR OR GIGGLING ANTICIPATION. THEN, ABRUPTLY, THE GUNS MAKE IT ALL REAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES. YOU CANNOT DOUBT WHAT YOUR EYES ARE SHOWING YOU. IT IS *INDEED* AN ATOMIC BOMB. IT IS NOW PRIMED.

RATHER THAN MY LECTURE, I WILL NOW PRESENT MY DEMANDS.

MY UKRAINE HAS LANGUISHED IN *POVERTY* WHILE HER COUSIN RUSSIA HAS GAINED ALL THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD. IT IS TIME FOR THIS TO *END*.

YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENTS SHALL LOAN MY UKRAINE 1.5 BILLION DOLLARS-- ONE BILLION PER KILOTON OF MY DEVICE HERE-- OR I SHALL *DESTROY* NEW YORK CITY.

KA-CHIK!

GUNS! EVERYBODY GET DOWN!!

ATOMIC TERRORISTS! PERCY WAS RIGHT! HO-LEE--!

CAN'T GET A CLEAR LINE OF FIRE!

GUNS! COMMIES WITH GUNS!!

... AND SORCERER WITH BIGGER GUN.



THE OVERLAPERS HAVE COME BEFORE THE PRIME, BY FAR THE OLDEST OF THE CREATURES DWELLING HERE, AND LINKED DIRECTLY INTO THE LIVING REALM ITSELF.

ALL DATA, GATHERED FROM A BILLION UNIVERSES, IS FED DIRECTLY THROUGH THIS CREATURE SO THAT THE OVERLAP MAY BE NOURISHED, AND THRIVE. SO IT HAS BEEN FOREVER.

COME FORTH AND SPEAK TO ME, MY EYES AND EARS.

MOST GRACIOUS SUPERIOR, OUR NEW EXPERIMENTS GO WELL.

THE BOMB...

WE WILL SOON LEARN IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO DESTROY A HELL-CREATURE WITH ATOMIC BOMBARDMENT. OUR EXPERIMENT WILL PROVIDE US WITH MUCH-NEEDED DATA ON THE PHYSICAL EXTREMES THE CREATURES OF EARTHIAN HELL CAN WITHSTAND.

TELL HIM ABOUT THE BOMB...

YES, YES. WE HAVE INSINUATED AN EARTHIAN PARTICLE-SPLITTING DEVICE. AND WITH THAT, WE HAVE ALSO CONDEMNED THAT MEDDLER HOUDINI TO HIS END.

VERY GOOD, PROCEED. I AM CERTAIN YOU WILL HAVE FRESH KNOWLEDGE TO FEED US. HOWEVER, THIS HOUDINI IS YOUR OWN AFFAIR.

YES, MY SUPERIOR. YOU SHALL BE WELL-FED...

...AND THE OVERLAP SHALL CELEBRATE THE TRIUMPH OF OUR NEW INFORMATION!



WHILE, ON EARTH, THE TEST CONTINUES...

PLEASE, EVERYONE TO REMAIN CALM. YOUR GUNS WILL NOT STOP US.

!!!

ALWAYS THE PERFORMER, HOUDINI STARTS THE SHOW WITH A SHOT INTO THE AIR.

KOOM

FRAYED NERVES SNAP. INSTINCT DIRECTS SHOTS AT THE ONLY FAMILIAR TARGET: SPECIAL AGENT FITZGERALD.

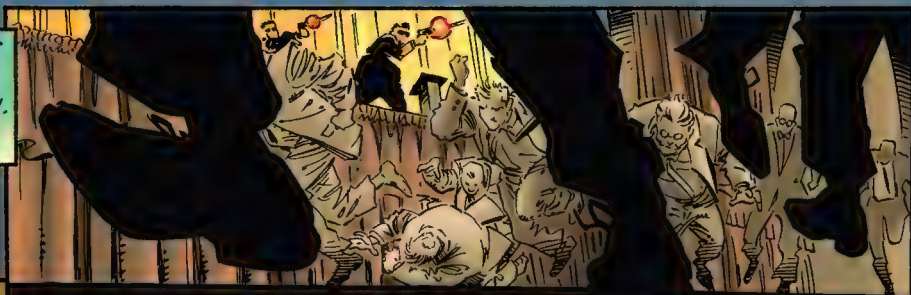
B  
L  
A  
M

JEE-ZUS!

NOOO!



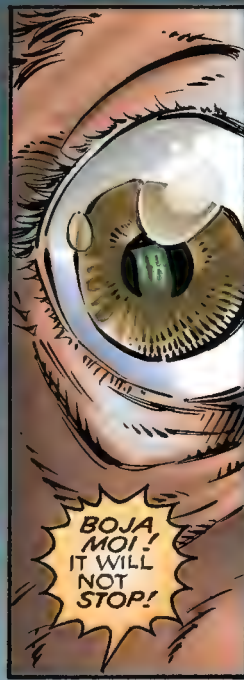
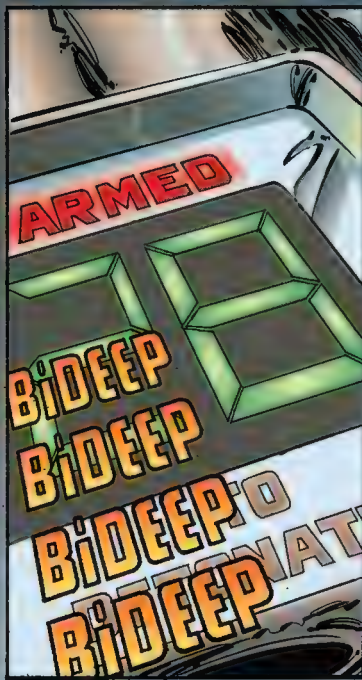
THE EXITS  
ARE FEW  
AND FAR  
BETWEEN.  
CHAOS  
ENSUES.



FOOLS. IT  
WOULD HAVE  
BEEN SO  
SIMPLE.

YOU IDIOTS!  
**ENOUGH!!**  
I HAVE  
STARTED THE  
**TIMER!**

LEGGO,  
IGOR!





15

I'VE DONE MY BIT. THAT'S MY CUE TO CHECK OUT OF HERE.

Aiiiiii!

Skorp!

THOSE SCHMUCKS HAVE SHUT ME OUT! IT'S TIME I PAID THEM A PIECE OF MY MIND.

CONCENTRATE...

...JUST ANOTHER TRAP...

...GOT MY PATHWAY...

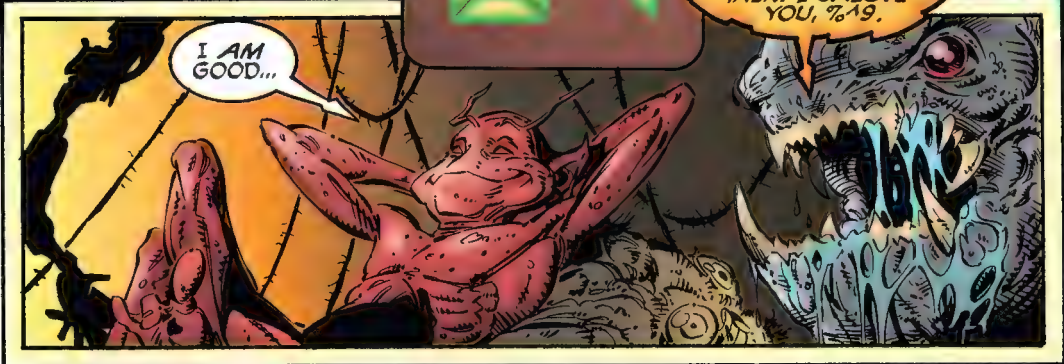
...VISUALIZE...

ARMED

DE

THIS IS OUR MOMENT! TO THINK WE FEARED HOUDINI'S REVOLUTIONARY TALK. I SALUTE YOU, %49.

I AM GOOD...





FOCUS!!!

HURTS!

TRANSMIT  
THE  
BLAST...

...CHANNEL...

...THE  
BLAST...

REALITY SHATTERS  
LIKE CANDIED GLASS.  
THE PART OF OUR  
UNIVERSE CONTAINING  
THE BOMB IS TRAPPED  
BY THE SORCERER, AND  
SHUNTED INTO  
ANOTHER PLACE.

THE INSTANT  
OF THE  
ATOM'S SPLIT--  
THE TIME  
WHEN FIERCE  
ENERGIES ARE  
RELEASED--  
NEVER EVEN  
HAPPENS  
ON OUR  
WORLD.

SPAWN  
CARRIES ON,  
UNAWARE  
OF THE  
PACKAGED  
MOMENT  
BEYOND HIM,  
VENTING HIS  
RAGE ON  
TERRY'S  
ATTACKER.

AS NATURE  
ABHORS A  
VACUUM, SO TOO  
DOES REALITY,  
ONLY MORE SO.  
THE STAGE AND  
OTHER PARTS OF  
OUR WORLD ARE  
RENT VIOLENTLY  
FROM THIS  
PLANE, FOLLOWING  
IN THE WAKE OF  
THE TRANS-  
PORTED BLAST.

MAGICIANS' CLUB  
STORAGE

COMPRESSED INTO A BEAM OF POWER, THE REALITY  
ENVELOPE IS SHOVED THROUGH THE MAIL SLOT OF  
AN UNSUSPECTING ADDRESSEE. BY REFLEX,  
HOUDINI USES THE MEMORY OF HIS TRUNK AS A  
FOCUS-- AND SENDS THE TIGHT PARTICULATE  
STREAM WHERE IT WILL DO THE MOST GOOD.



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S LECTURE HALL IS BUZZING WITH AMAZED SCIENTISTS. THERE WAS LESS THAN A SECOND OF LIGHT-- BUT THAT WAS ENOUGH TO INSPIRE IDLE SPECULATION FOR YEARS TO COME.



FRIED.  
DAMN. I HAD SO MUCH TO LEARN FROM YOU HOUDINI-- IF YOU REALLY WERE HOUDINI.

A FLASH...

AND THEN...

IT VANISHED...

OR SOMETHING...

DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

Eh-- IT WAS JUST THE ICE MACHINE DOWN THE HALL.

H. GEIGER  
1882-1945

MOMENTS AGO, THESE GEIGER COUNTERS WERE SET OFF THE SCALE BY RADIATION FROM KOLOKHOV'S BOMB.

SO THOROUGH WAS HOUDINI'S MAGIC THAT, FOR A MOMENT, EVEN NORMAL BACKGROUND LEVELS WERE FLAT.





...APPEARS TO BE AN ATTEMPTED NUCLEAR TERRORIST ACTION AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. WHAT YOU ARE SEEING IS AMATEUR VIDEO, SHOWING WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE TWO OF THE TERRORISTS. POLICE WILL SAY ONLY THAT ONE IS AN AMERICAN, THE OTHER A UKRAINIAN NATIONAL, AND THAT THERE WAS SOME SORT OF BOMB THREAT.



WITNESSES CLAIM THAT THOUGH IT SEEMED THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION, THE EVIDENCE IS IN DISPUTE. HOWEVER, THE PRESENCE OF AN ARMED ATOMIC BOMB HAS BEEN CORROBORATED BY ANY NUMBER OF EXPERT WITNESSES.

FIRE CREWS ARE LOOKING FOR ANY POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE REPORTS AND A BLACKENED PART OF THE HALL WHERE THE STAGE HAD BEEN.



THE ALLEGED THREAT WAS APPARENTLY AVERTED BY A SUSPECTED YOUNGBLOOD, THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN "FRIED TO A CRISP" BY SOME UNKNOWN FORCE AT THE SCENE.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED BOTH THE REPORT OF THE NUCLEAR THREAT AND SUPPOSED EXPLOSION, AND OF ANY YOUNGBLOOD ACTIVITY IN NEW YORK CITY AT THAT TIME. COULD THIS HAVE BEEN A ROGUE 'BLOOD, CONNECTED TO SOME PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN ORGANIZATION?



CERTAINLY SOMEONE OR SOMETHING WAS RECORDED LEAVING THE SCENE. HERE WITH AN ANALYSIS...



ELSEWHERE  
ON THE  
COLUMBIA  
CAMPUS...

SEEMS  
HOUDINI LEFT  
THE CAR INVISIBLE.  
THAT MAKES IT  
UP TO ME TO  
FIND IT.

JUST  
CONCENTRATE...  
USE THE COSTUME  
TO REARRANGE THE  
PHOTONS... MAKE  
THE CAR  
REAPPEAR...

PERFECT. I GUESS I  
MIGHT BETTER AT MAGIC  
THAN I THOUGHT.

SORRY  
ABOUT THE  
MYSTERY HERE,  
TERRY, BUT I  
CAN'T HAVE YOU  
KNOW ABOUT  
ME JUST YET.

DAMMIT!  
HOUDINI HAD  
THE KEYS!

FINE.  
I'LL JUST  
MANIFEST  
THEM.

EASY!

BY CREATING THE KEY,  
SPAWN PASSED HOUDINI'S  
TEST.

WHAT  
THE--

THE CAR'S  
PURPOSE THUS  
FULFILLED, IT  
DEFAULTS  
BACK TO THE  
OVERLAP.



BACK IN THE BOWERY, LIFE HAS RETURNED TO NORMAL IN THE HOURS AFTER THE LECTURE...

THE POLICE, LEFT WITH NO EVIDENCE OF A CRIME, HAVE DROPPED ALL CHARGES AGAINST PORSCHE MacNEIL.

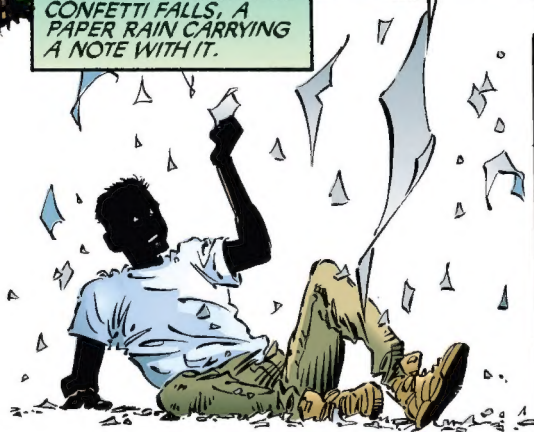


I SHOULD'VE GOT SOME **FOOD** FROM MOM, TOO. I'M **STARVED**.

HEY... SOMEONE'S BEEN **IN** HERE. I..



THOUGH LOUD, THE BLAST WAS HARMLESS. CONFETTI FALLS, A PAPER RAIN CARRYING A NOTE WITH IT.

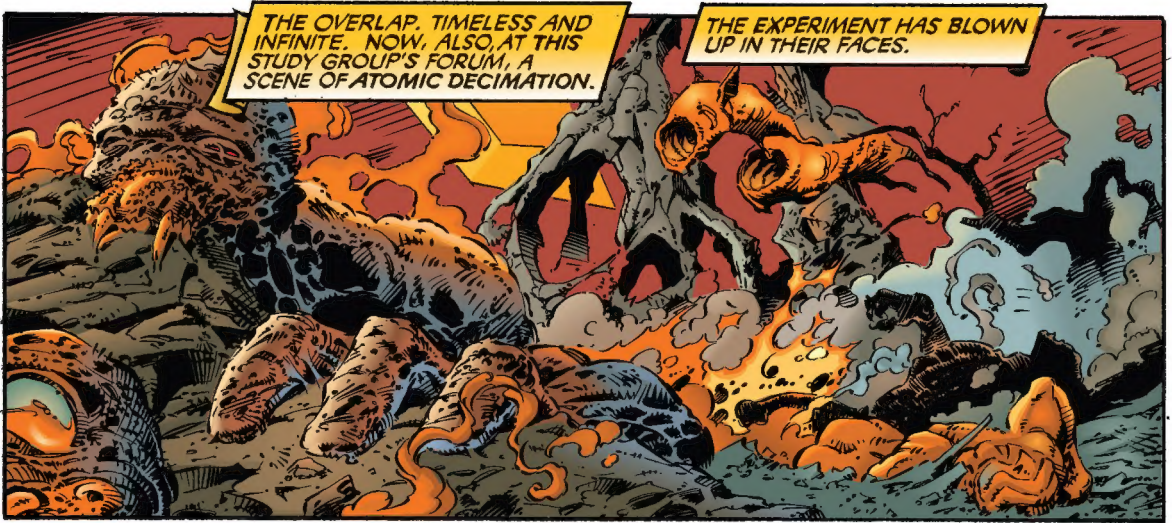


DON'T EVER MESS WITH ME OR MY ALLEY AGAIN, OR THE NEXT ONE TAKES OUT YOU AND THE WHOLE BUILDING WITH IT.

— SPAWN

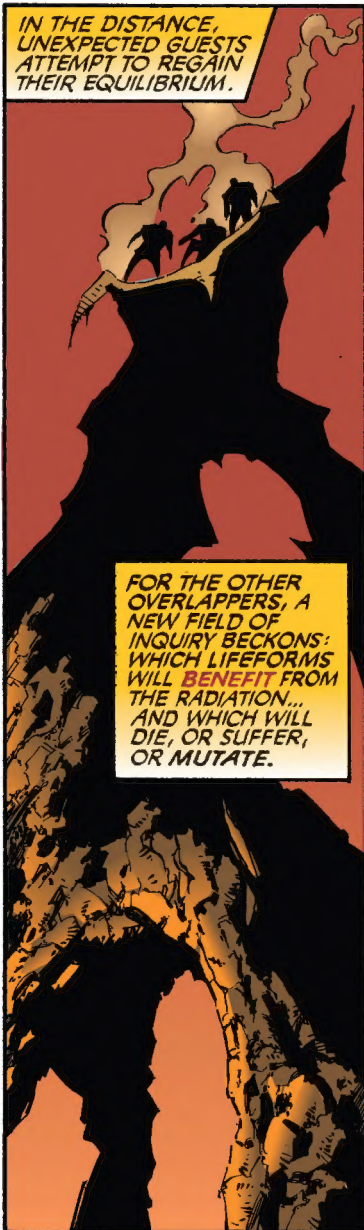






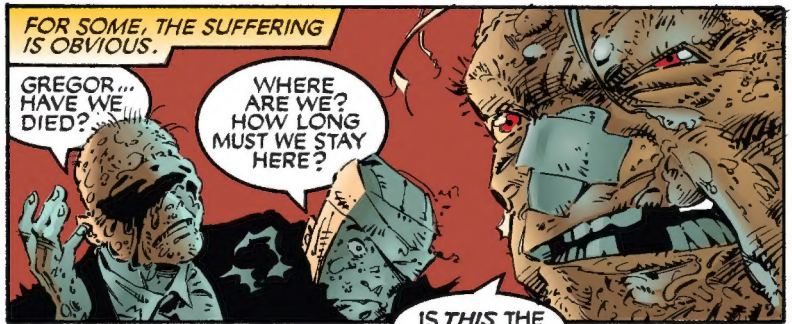
THE OVERLAP. TIMELESS AND INFINITE. NOW, ALSO, AT THIS STUDY GROUP'S FORUM, A SCENE OF ATOMIC DECIMATION.

THE EXPERIMENT HAS BLOWN UP IN THEIR FACES.



IN THE DISTANCE, UNEXPECTED GUESTS ATTEMPT TO REGAIN THEIR EQUILIBRIUM.

FOR THE OTHER OVERLAPERS, A NEW FIELD OF INQUIRY BECKONS: WHICH LIFEFORMS WILL **BENEFIT** FROM THE RADIATION... AND WHICH WILL DIE, OR SUFFER, OR MUTATE.



FOR SOME, THE SUFFERING IS OBVIOUS.

GREGOR... HAVE WE DIED?

WHERE ARE WE? HOW LONG MUST WE STAY HERE?

IS THIS THE AFTERLIFE?



NOT AT ALL, EARTHIAN SCUM! NOW THAT YOUR ENERGY HAS BEEN DAMPENED, YOU HAVE MUCH TO ANSWER FOR, AND EVEN MORE TO CLEAN!

IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW YOUR KIND FARE AGAINST RADIATION BURNS, LITTLE HUMANS. WE HAVE **FOREVER** TO LEARN!

raaht--  
CLEAN!  
CLEAN!

FOREVER!  
--raahtt--  
FOREVER!



AGAIN, 1916,  
ON A STAGE IN  
LOS ANGELES...

THE HUSHED  
AUDIENCE IS  
TERRIFIED.  
NO NORMAL  
HUMAN BEING  
COULD HAVE  
SURVIVED THIS  
LONG-- FIVE  
MINUTES!--  
WITHOUT AIR.

HE HASN'T  
GOT OUT YET!  
HARRY SAID  
RAISE IT  
AFTER FIVE  
MINUTES!

THE  
TRUNK IS  
LOWERED  
TO THE  
STAGE.

INTENSITY BUILDS.  
THE GENTEEL CROWD  
WAITS BREATHLESSLY.  
WILL THEY SEE DEATH  
FIRSTHAND?



ONCE MORE,  
HARRY HOUDINI  
HAS MYSTIFIED  
THEM.

THANK  
YOU!  
YOU'RE  
TOO  
KIND!

A COUPLE  
MORE MANACLES  
AND I WOULDN'T'VE  
HAD THE SECONDS  
TO SLIP AWAY  
AND BACK!

HM... PERHAPS  
I CAN WORK THAT  
"DIVERTED EXPLO-  
SION" GIMMICK  
INTO MY SHOW.

OF COURSE,  
%42 MIGHT  
HAVE SOME-  
THING TO SAY  
AGAINST  
THAT.

LUCKY  
FOR HIM,  
I'LL HAVE  
TO SAVE  
THAT  
ENCORE FOR  
ANOTHER  
DAY.

Ahhh...  
MY PUBLIC.  
I RETURN  
FOR YOU YET  
AGAIN!

WHERE'S  
HIS  
CAPE?



The END





Tyrant  
Lizard  
King

EMPIRE